DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 797 CE 079 270

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TITLE A New Assessment Tool. A Professional Development Kit for Trainers and Assessors Incorporating Language, Literacy and Numeracy Skills into Training Packages.
INSTITUTION Australian National Training Authority, Melbourne.
SPONS AGENCY Australian Dept. of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.
ISBN ISBN-0-642-56533-3
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 87p.; Cover page varies.
AVAILABLE FROM Australian National Training Authority, GPO Box 3120, Brisbane, Queensland 4001 Australia.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; *Communication Skills; Educational Assessment; Educational Change; Evaluation Criteria; Foreign Countries; Job Skills; Job Training; Learning Activities; Learning Modules; *Literacy Education; *Numeracy; Program Implementation; *Student Evaluation; *Workplace Literacy
IDENTIFIERS *Australia

ABSTRACT

This kit is designed to help trainers and assessors understand the importance of workplace communication in training packages. Section 1 explains what trainers and assessors need to know about communication skills, and how to use the kit. Section 2 provides an overview of training packages. It describes the endorsed parts of the package, which include the National Competency Standards, assessment guidelines, and qualifications aligned to the Australian Qualifications Framework; and the nonendorsed components, which are the learning strategy, assessment resources, and professional development materials. Section 3 examines the importance of language, literacy, numeracy, and cross-cultural understanding in all aspects of work life. Section 4 explains why some people may have difficulties with language, literacy, and numeracy, and why trainers and assessors should be mindful of this when training and assessing. Section 5 shows ways in which the communication skills of language, literacy, and numeracy have been included in training packages. Section 6 helps trainers and assessors in the planning and delivery of training programs. Section 7 provides important advice on how language, literacy, and numeracy must be addressed when trainers and assessors are assessing. Section 8 provides examples of sample assessment tasks from a range of training packages--from tourism to information technology. Throughout the kit are activities that can be used individually or in workshops with fellow trainers and assessors to help create understanding of communication in training packages. Section 9 lists 3 contacts and 28 references. (YLB)

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Information kit for assessors and workplace trainers on incorporating language, literacy and numeracy skills into Training Packages

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a new

assessment tool

incorporating language, literacy and numeracy skills into Training Packages

a professional development kit for trainers and assessors

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to all those who contributed material for use in this resource. Special thanks to ANTA and the Manufacturing, Engineering & Related Services Industry Training Advisory Body for the use of *Addressing Language Literacy and Numeracy Issues in Workplace Assessment* as the basis for several sections of this kit.

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The Workplace Communication in Training Packages project is funded under the Workplace English Language and literacy program by the Commonwealth through the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs

The development of this resource has been managed by a consortium of Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE and Communication in Education and Training Pty Ltd (COMMET)

ISBN No: 0-642-56533-3

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1. Introduction

This kit has been developed for trainers and assessors to help understand the importance of workplace communication in Training Packages. It enables trainers and assessors to examine:

- communication skills that people need in doing their job, as expressed in Training Package Competency Standards
- communication skills required by trainees to participate in training and be assessed in accordance with Training Package requirements
- communication skills required by trainers and assessors to effectively implement Training Packages.

What do trainers and assessors need to know about communication skills?

Trainers and assessors need to be able to...

- recognise where communication skills are included in Competency Standards and how those skills relate to workplace tasks
- identify people who might have communication skills difficulties
- identify when they need to seek help from a language, literacy or numeracy expert
- identify the kinds of skills a language, literacy and/or numeracy expert should have.

In addition, **trainers** also need to be able to...

- plan and deliver training programs which are appropriate for the communication skills of the participants
- plan and deliver training programs which integrate communication skills and other work skills
- select and develop training materials which are appropriate for the communication skills of the participants
- explain a variety of ways of using language, literacy and numeracy experts in planning and delivering training.

In addition, **assessors** also need to be able to...

- plan and conduct assessments which are fair, valid, reliable and flexible
- select and develop assessment materials which are appropriate for the communication skills of the participants
- explain a variety of ways of using language, literacy and numeracy experts in assessment
- explain some of the issues relating to the use of interpreters in assessment.

It is highly recommended that all trainers and assessors who do not have the competencies listed above participate in a workplace communication skills awareness program. There are a range of programs available. More details are included in Section 9 *References* in this kit.

How to use this kit

You do not need to read this kit from cover to cover. It is designed so that you can go to different sections according to your particular needs.

Section 2 *Training Packages—the big picture* gives you an overview of Training Packages.

Section 3 *Communication at work* examines the importance of language, literacy, numeracy and cross-cultural understanding in all aspects of work life.

Section 4 *Difficulties in communication* tells you why some people may have difficulties with language, literacy and numeracy and why you should be mindful of this when you are training and assessing.

Section 5 *Workplace communication skills* shows the ways in which the communication skills of language, literacy and numeracy have been included in Training Packages.

Section 6 *Communication skills and training* helps you in the planning and delivery of training programs.

Section 7 *Communication skills and assessment* provides important advice on how language, literacy and numeracy must be addressed when you are assessing.

Section 8 *Assessment tasks in Training Packages* provides examples of sample assessment tasks from a range of Training Packages—from tourism to information technology.

Throughout the kit are activities which you can use on your own, or in workshops with fellow trainers and assessors, to help you understand communication in Training Packages.

2. Training Packages–the big picture

The National Training Framework

The National Training Framework (NTF) is one of a number of initiatives in vocational education and training designed to improve the capacity, relevance and responsiveness of Australia's VET system. The two major components of the NTF are:

1. The introduction of national Training Packages as the basis for training in all industry sectors.
2. Implementation of the Australian Recognition Framework arrangements.

Training Packages include both endorsed and non-endorsed components. The endorsed components of Training Packages include:

- competency standards
- assessment guidelines
- qualifications aligned to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

(There have been some changes in the ways in which competency standards are written to make them more useable as assessment benchmarks.)

Non-endorsed components are an optional part of a training package and may vary considerably across industries. Generally they will include learning strategies, assessment resources, and professional development materials.

Training Packages, along with the new recognition arrangements, represent a major shift in emphasis from:

- quality control through central accreditation of curriculum to the quality assured approach of the registration of training organisations
- a curriculum based system to a Training Package based system
- an emphasis on off-the-job training and assessment to increased opportunity for assessment against competency standards in the workplace

Implications of the changes

For industry as a whole, the changes are likely to mean:

- training is more directly related to workplace requirements
- more on-the-job training and assessment
- registered training organisations will be more responsive to industry needs.

For registered training and assessment providers, the changes will mean:

- an immediate need to provide staff development for understanding and responding to the changes
- an increased need to establish partnerships with industry
- an increased need to maintain training staff's vocational competency, particularly for assessment purposes where the endorsed assessment guidelines will establish the requirements for assessment in the industry
- more competition for delivery of training and assessment services, with the introduction of assessment-only providers.

A new view of assessment

Assessment has always been important but in the past it has often been the training component of training and assessment which has been the major focus. Within the NTF, however, assessment achieves a much more prominent role, becoming a critical quality control mechanism in several new ways.

1. Credentials are now much more directly linked to the assessment of workplace competency. It is that **assessment against the standards** which is critical, rather than the completion of a training program or assessment against learning outcomes.
2. The quality of training provision is now linked to control of assessment processes. **Assessors rather than trainers** must satisfy the requirements as set out in the endorsed industry assessment guidelines. This will entail assessors themselves having the competencies they are assessing or working closely with industry experts who have those competencies.

In contrast to the idea of assessment as something which is of secondary importance (following a training program), we need to move to a view of assessment as an integral part of vocational education and training.

Good assessment practice should incorporate a range of methods, including those designed to assess the knowledge and skills a candidate may have acquired through formal learning, work experience or life experience.

What you need to know about the new system

You are probably familiar with national Competency Standards for your industry. Many industries have been developing or redeveloping their Competency Standards as part of the new Training Packages. The Competency Standards specify industry standards in relation to the knowledge and skills required by each industry, and their application in the workplace. Here's an example of what a Unit of Competency looks like. It gives a good idea of how language, literacy and numeracy have been made explicit in newly developed Standards—these features have been emphasised in the text.

Forest Growing and Management Draft Standards	
023 Store & dispatch seed	
This unit is concerned with storing seed in, and dispatching seed from, a seed store.	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
1. Store seed for later use	• Organisational occupational health & safety procedures, practices, policies, and precautions are observed and followed • All seed information required by organisational procedures is **recorded using the organisation's record keeping system** • **Record the provenance of the seed** in accordance with organisational guidelines • Seed is treated to prevent deterioration in accordance with seed species and/organisational procedures • **Seed is packaged, accurately and clearly labelled,** and placed in accordance with organisational procedures
2. Prepare seed sample for viability testing	• Organisational occupational health and safety procedures, practices, policies, and precautions are observed and followed • **Seed sample for testing is identified from written or oral request, or supervisor's instructions** • Seed sample is removed from lot in accordance with organisational procedures • Seed sample is prepared for testing in accordance with organisational specifications • **Representative seed sample is packaged, accurately and clearly labelled, and dispatched to testing body** • **Test results are recorded upon completion and any organisational pro-forma(s) are completed in accordance with organisational procedures**

Forest Growing and Management Draft Standards	
023 Store & dispatch seed	
This unit is concerned with storing seed in, and dispatching seed from, a seed store.	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
3. Dispatch seed	• Organisational occupational health and safety procedures, practices, policies, and precautions are observed and followed • **Written request for seed is interpreted and, where necessary, verbal or written clarification sought** • Store is searched to retrieve the range, and variety, of seed species to match the request • **Quantity of each seed species is calculated from the seed mix specified in the request, area to be sown, and organisation's table of specifications, according to the request** • **Each seed species is weighed according to previously calculated quantities** • Each seed species is placed into a container appropriate for the client, or in accordance with the request • Where required, multiple seed lots are thoroughly mixed in accordance with organisational procedures • **Seed/seed mixture is accurately and clearly labelled** in accordance with organisational procedures • Where necessary, **appropriate documents are obtained** in accordance with regulations and enterprise guidelines • Seed dispatch is arranged and undertaken in accordance with the request and organisation guidelines • **Records of the transaction are documented and organisational record keeping system updated**

Range of Variables

- Maintenance of records may include: collation (of information or documentation); interpreting information in a way relevant to workplace requirements; organising and maintaining records accurately
- Systems may be electronic and/or manual
- Equipment may include: electric scales; manual scales; sleeve type sampling device; various packaging materials and containers; seed cleaning machine

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- Seed information to be recorded may include: species; time/date of harvest, time/date of receipt into store; origin of seed
- Lifting devices may include: overhead gantry; forklift
- Sampling method may include: quartering; seed dividers
- Seed treatment may include: fungicides; cleaning
- Testing body may be internal or external to the organisation
- Criteria for the appropriate container for seed dispatch may include: length of time the seed will be stored; method which will be used to transport the seed; equipment to be used for sowing seed; quantity of seed; size of individual seeds
- Request may be: written; computer-generated; system-generated;
- Specifications of request may include: seed species; percentage of seed mix; pure graded seed; rate of sowing; area to be sown; dispatch container; method of dispatch; sowing equipment to be used
- Additional documents may be required where seed is being sent overseas and may include: phyto sanitary certificate; import/export permit

Evidence Guide

Critical underpinning knowledge

- Concepts of, and reasons for, ongoing seed collection, storage and dispatch
- **Seed calculation methods**
- **Record keeping system for seed storage**
- Hazards associated with the storage, treatment and dispatch of seed
- Occupational health and safety guidelines, procedures, and principles, including manual handling
- Packaging and storage methods and systems for seed species used by the organisation
- Organisational occupational health and safety procedures, practices, and policies
- Enterprise specifications for the safe operation of seed treatment using chemicals

Critical underpinning skills

- **Understand a variety of information styles**
- Interpret information in a way relevant to workplace requirements
- Follow instructions for receiving goods/checking documentation
- Locate, interpret and check information
- Record information on a simple form accurately
- Recognise common diseases, pest, and nutrition deficiencies
- Organise and maintain records accurately

- Identify seed species using visual criteria and label information
- Maintain a clean working environment to prevent contamination of seed
- Adhere to quality control guidelines
- Calculate of quantity using: sowing rate, percentage of components in seed mix, area to be sown, specifications table
- Prepare accurate and clear labels
- Obtain documentation and phyto sanitary certificates and import/export permits

Critical assessment issues

Competency should be demonstrated in an actual workplace or in a situation which reproduces workplace conditions.

Assessment and Packaging

Training Packages provide the basis for helping people achieve Competency Standards. As an assessor, you will be assessing evidence of people's competence directly against Competency Standards in your industry's Training Package, so that they can receive a national qualification.

Most industries will have core or common competencies, sector specific competencies and/or optional competencies. They'll all look a bit different, so get to know the ones you will use and make sure they are the latest version. You can refer to the ANTA National Training Information Service website at www.anta.gov.au/ntis to check the currency of a Training Package document.

The Competency Standards, developed by an industry after research and consultation, are **packaged** together into qualifications according to the requirements of particular industries or industry sectors. For example, on the next page look at how some of the Transport and Distribution (Warehousing) Units of Competency have been packaged into a Certificate II qualification within their Training Package.

People will be assessed against these packaged Competency Standards in order to gain a qualification which is recognised throughout Australia. Training Packages will be made up of these packaged Competency Standards and qualifications which relate to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). They also contain Assessment Guidelines which include requirements for assessors and guidance on how to assess people's competence.

There are also published resources related to industry Training Packages. These may include learning strategies, assessment resources and professional development materials.

TDT 201 97 Certificate II in Transport & Distribution (Warehousing)	
Qualification Contents Units may be selected from the following units of Competency aligned to Certificate II. Certificates I units (7), are prerequisites for this qualification.	
A general qualification for the Warehousing Industry. Successful completion will require competency in units that relate to work defined as aligned to AQF Level 2. **"Performance of a prescribed range of functions involving known routines and procedures and some accountability for the quality of outcomes"**	
Field	**Unit**
A Handling Stock	A11 Package Goods A12 Pick and Process Orders A13 Receive Goods A14 Use Product Knowledge to Complete Work Operations A20 Replenish Stock A21 Despatch Stock A22 Participate in Stocktakes
B Equipment Checking and Maintenance	B1 Check and Assess Occupational Capability of Equipment
D Load Handling	D3 Handle Dangerous and Hazardous Goods D4 Load and Unload Goods/Cargo D7 Prepare Cargo for Transfer with Slings D10 Operate a Forklift D12 Operate Specialised Load Shifting Equipment
F Occupational Health and Safety	F6 Apply Emergency/Accident Procedures
I Customer Service	I2 Apply Customer Service Skills
J Quality	J1 Apply Quality Procedures
K Computing and Technology	K1 Use Computer Applications K2 Use Infotechnology Devices in the Workplace

Requirements for completion of the Qualification

A successful assessment outcome for 7 of the 18 units aligned with this qualification consistent with the Transport and Distribution Training Package Assessment Guidelines. If additional units are acquired, credit for two additional units may be credited to Certificate.

3. Communication at work

Communication happens in all jobs

When we talk about workplace communication, we mean the language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, and numeracy. It's very hard to think of a job that doesn't require language or numeracy skills. For example, in the past maybe you didn't really need to do much reading, writing or maths as a farmer, but today things are very different.

> *Margaret is a market gardener in Werribee, Victoria. As well as growing very healthy-looking lettuces, which are sold in supermarkets in Melbourne, she has to engage in a number of communication tasks. For example, recently she has been writing up a Sustainable Farm Plan for her bank manager as part of an application for a loan to build a new tractor shed. She's also had to regularly complete quality management forms for her agent to comply with the procedures of the large supermarket chain which sells her lettuces. Another task involving writing skills has been to draw up a job advertisement for an packaging assistant.*

In Australia, when people refer to language skills, they usually mean English language skills, but often other community and foreign languages may be used.

> *Georgia works as an attendant caregiver to disabled elderly people in their homes. She works mainly in the northern suburbs of Melbourne where many of her clients speak Greek as their first language. Because Georgia is bilingual she is able to communicate to the elderly people in Greek about their daily domestic needs, and is also able to explain official documents for them when necessary.*

Numeracy is also a part of communication skills. Many jobs require an understanding of mathematical concepts. Numeracy is not just about doing

arithmetic or higher level calculations with mathematical symbols, although this is part of it. Numeracy also includes skills like estimating quantities, measuring things, and getting information from graphs and diagrams. Many people are afraid of what they see as 'maths', especially if they have had bad experiences at school. Often people are not aware that, in performing particular work tasks, they are showing they do understand mathematical concepts.

Kevin works in a large manufacturing company. He left school at the end of primary school and has not received any numeracy training since. The company, as part of its quality control processes, has just introduced statistical process control. Kevin is not familiar with the type of graphs used to record production but is required to plot the data on both line and bar graphs as part of his job. The Company decides to employ a trainer to teach employees like Kevin the basic mathematical skills required for drawing and interpreting graphs.

Communication skills are required by all

Everyone in a workplace needs effective communication skills that suit the purpose. In the following case study, the production engineer rather than the workers needed to improve communication.

A manufacturing company producing aerospace components was concerned that their production workers' English literacy skills prevented them from reading the job specifications sheets, resulting in a high percentage of faulty items. When a language expert assessed the workers, she found that they actually had high levels of English skills, including literacy. Many of them had degrees from English-speaking universities overseas, but their 'foreign' accents caused their manager to think that they had minimal literacy skills. The REAL problem was that the production engineer had written job specifications in jargon that was not easily understood by anyone but himself!

Activity: Types of communication

To understand the types of communication which are common to all workplaces, answer the questions below in relation to your organisation.

1. What communication systems are in place within the organisation? How does the workplace communicate with its employees? How are employees expected to communicate with it? What paperwork is required by all parties for the workplace to meet its obligations to employees?

2. How do employees communicate **cooperatively** with other workers about work matters? Do they read or write shift reports? Do they listen to, read or write messages? Do they discuss and agree on rosters? Do they participate in collective enterprise bargaining?

3. Do employees have to follow or give written or verbal instructions to perform **procedures** or to get others to perform tasks? Do they have to prepare funding submissions?

4. Do employees have to interact with the **public** or wider community? Do they take phone enquiries, deal with customers or clients? Do they have to give oral presentations?

5. Do employees have to follow or give instructions to use **technology** to complete tasks, read manuals, use a computer or to use the correct technical term?

6. How do employees learn new skills? How do employees communicate when **learning** new skills? What on-the-job training is done? By whom? Do they have to use a training manual?

7. Do employees have to use language, literacy and numeracy to pursue **personal** needs or goals? For example, are they required to respond to a colleague who needs support in a personal matter, to write a letter, or to give or listen to an explanation of a personal matter which affects work?

Activity: Communication skills in work tasks

1. In a typical day, what are the tasks you do in your job which involve communication skills?

2. Can you recognise the types of communication listed above (systems, cooperative, procedures etc.)?

An example is given for Sally, a person working as a supermarket retail assistant.

Communication skills	Tasks in Sally's job	Tasks in your job
Reading	• Reading memos from managers • Reading latest product and promotional literature • Reading price lists.	
Writing	• Writing addresses on home delivery forms • Writing memos to supervisor.	
Speaking	• Speaking to customers to give information on payment, and products • Making friendly conversation with customers and colleagues • Asking colleagues for price checks • Communicating information to supervisors about problems with cash register.	
Listening	• Listening to customers' requests on products, home delivery, querying of prices • Listening to loudspeaker announcements • Listening to customers chatting.	
Maths/numeracy	• Reconciliation of cash • Checking totals on receipts • Handing correct change to customer.	
Visual literacy	• Understanding evacuation and safety plans • Interpreting floor and aisle plans to locate items for customers • Fast identification of information on food item labels.	

What are cross-cultural factors in workplace communication?

Communication is not just about language. It is also about the unspoken conventions and rules about how people communicate, so that people know what to do in a particular situation. This is called the 'cultural context'. Apologising, asking questions, interrupting and joking are all forms of communication which depend on an understanding of cultural context.

Each culture has a range of social conventions which people learn from childhood. We learn the unspoken rules about what to say, who to speak to and when to speak, as well as rules about appropriate body language, dress and other complex customs. These conventions and rules become built-in and 'automatic' so, when we come across people who have other ways of doing things, we sometimes think of them as 'odd' or different.

In a multicultural workplace, there will be a wide range of cultures and so a wide range of in-built customs and rules about communicating. Unless people are aware of, and respect, these differences, misunderstandings and offence can occur.

Cross-cultural aspects do not only apply to communication between people from different language backgrounds. They may also apply to any communication between people from different cultural backgrounds eg. people who work in the public and private sector.

Activity: Cross-cultural communication

1. Choose a cultural group you know well.
2. List the rules that apply for someone who belongs to that culture.
3. Discuss what happens when someone new joins the group.
4. What happens if they don't know the rules?
5. What is needed for that person to have effective communication with the group?
6. Share experiences from your workplace, where cross-cultural factors have resulted in misunderstanding either in work or in assessment.
7. Discuss what cross-cultural strategies can be used in assessment to help the candidate.

Notes for trainers/assessors

Find out as much as you can about the culture of your trainees/assessment candidates; ask the supervisor or someone in the workplace who shares the same cultural background. If cross-cultural issues have a major impact on workplace assessments in your enterprise, consider conducting a cross-cultural training program or get help from an expert in that field.

In the **assessment** process,

- you should be aware of cultural factors when you are planning and preparing the assessment and when you are giving feedback to the candidate
- you need to be aware of the body language messages you send during the assessment process, as these can affect the candidate's performance. You should also be responsive to the candidate's body language to ensure that you have a shared understanding of what's required in an assessment task
- make all information as clear as possible; candidates must know exactly what is expected of them throughout the assessment process
- find out how that culture might view assessment. Is age or respect an important factor? Is gender an important factor?

What is the relationship between language, literacy and numeracy?

In everyday workplace tasks it is common for a person to use and respond to spoken and written language and use numeracy skills at the same time, all within a cultural context which needs to be interpreted and responded to appropriately.

When designing workplace learning and assessment tasks, you should be aware of this interlinking of language, literacy and numeracy. These skills should also be taught and assessed in the context in which they are used rather than in isolation.

4. Difficulties in communication

Why do some people have literacy or numeracy difficulties?

There are many reasons why an individual may have difficulty with literacy or numeracy. This section looks at four groups of people who may experience such difficulties:

1. Those who have missed out on their basic education.
2. Those who come from a language background other than English.
3. Those who have a specific learning disability.
4. Those with an intellectual disability.

Individuals may belong to more than one of these groups (eg. come from a language background other than English and have a specific learning disability).

As workplace assessors, it is essential to treat each employee as an individual. Do not judge the ability of a candidate on the basis of their language/literacy/numeracy skills.

It is very important that you treat candidates who have language/literacy/numeracy difficulties with sensitivity. A lot of emotional issues relating to poor language/literacy/numeracy skills may be raised during the assessment process.

Confidentiality is also crucial. The language/literacy/numeracy difficulties of a candidate should not be discussed with other employees/staff members unless the permission of the candidate has been given.

1. Missing out on formal education

There are many reasons why people may have missed learning basic skills throughout their schooling. These may include:

- sickness of self or parents
- missed time at school or frequent changes of school
- money problems
- growing up in a war-torn country
- separation of parents
- living too far from a school
- racial discrimination
- parental attitudes to education (it's more important to get a job).

Adults in this category often feel frustration and anger. They know they are not stupid but are seen to be so because of poor language/literacy/numeracy skills.

Language, literacy and numeracy training is often very successful and results in an increase in self-esteem, change in attitude and increased work productivity. Motivation of the employee for training is a key factor.

Activity: Steve's secret

Discussion of this case study can be used to:

(a) promote discussion of the effects of poor or no schooling

(b) raise the issue of emotional factors associated with low levels of language/literacy/numeracy and people's unwillingness to disclose their problems

(c) raise the issue of confidentiality during the assessment process.

Steve is employed as a process worker in a company that manufactures electrical parts. He is a very competent worker: fast, efficient and accurate. The supervisor only needs to tell him something once and he's got it. His communication and problem solving skills are excellent and he gets on with everyone.

He comes from a farming family and has excellent practical, hands-on skills. He knows as much about the machines as anyone. His parents manage a property in North Queensland. He talks a lot about how the family moved around when he was young, how isolated some of the properties were and how much fun it was. He would love to go back, but there is no work for him.

The supervisor recommends Steve for assessment. When Steve is told this he gets very angry, saying he is happy where he is.

Later, another worker tells the supervisor that Steve can't read or write. Steve never really went to school. He worked with his family on the farm and did a little bit of correspondence school, but it was always more fun on the machines and around the farm.

Discussion

Why might Steve have reacted the way he did?

What action might the supervisor take?

Notes for trainer/assessor

Emotional factors for people with language/literacy/numeracy difficulties may include:

- low self-esteem
- lack of confidence
- negative view of one's learning ability ('I can't do that' or 'I'm so stupid')
- unwillingness to take risks because of fear of failure
- embarrassment over lack of skills
- depression
- isolation.

2. Coming from a language background other than English

Some people from a language background other than English will be fluent in English as well as a community language. Others may have had few opportunities to learn or practise English. Some of these employees, because of disadvantage in their home country (missing out on formal education, war, poverty, refugee status etc.), may not be literate in their first language.

The loss of economic and social status, because of poor English language/literacy/numeracy skills and/or non-recognition of qualifications, may result in low self-esteem.

Often the main difficulty for candidates from a non-English speaking background is the lack of fluency in English, whether spoken or written. The use of an interpreter will assist you in the assessment process.

Some people may feel embarrassed by their dependence on others to interpret (eg. workmates or relatives).

Cross-cultural communication issues cannot be underestimated in the context of workplace assessment.

Language/literacy/numeracy training is often successful for this group and may result in an increase in self-esteem, change in attitude and increased work productivity. Awareness of the factors above will assist these employees to succeed in training.

3. Having a specific learning disability

Specific learning disability refers to a condition where a person is in the normal range of intelligence and has experienced normal schooling, but may have difficulties in learning new skills and/or language/literacy/numeracy.

Employees with a specific learning disability may have extremely good verbal and practical skills but have weak reading, writing and spelling skills.

Adults within this category have usually had very negative experiences with education and training. They may have very low self-esteem and lack confidence.

These employees may have difficulty with short term memory and so may often forget things, seem disorganised, always be running late and have problems following a series of instructions or a sequence.

Language/literacy/numeracy training needs to be specific, structured and repetitive if an employee with a specific learning disability is to benefit and improve to any degree.

4. Having an intellectual disability

Intellectual disability refers to those individuals who experience difficulty with all types of learning because of impaired cognitive (problem-solving) ability.

Employees with intellectual disability may require specific and specialised training when developing new skills in the workplace.

The assessment of underpinning knowledge will be a major issue for this category of employee.

Employees with an intellectual disability may come into a workplace with a trainer from a support agency and be trained on a specific job. If more training is needed, the support agency is able to assist.

Employees with an intellectual disability may not always benefit as much as other groups from formal classes, but will benefit from integrated literacy and numeracy activities in the workplace.

The cognitive aspects of intellectual disability mean that this is more than a language/literacy/numeracy issue; however, some of the strategies suggested in this resource may help.

Notes for trainers/assessors

Remember that a person may have different levels of skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. For example, a person may have very good verbal skills but have a writing problem.

People often develop survival strategies to hide the degree of difficulty they really experience. Disclosure of literacy/numeracy problems may be an issue. As an assessor it is essential to understand that, for some candidates, the language/ literacy/numeracy demands of the assessment process may be the biggest challenge they have ever faced in the workplace.

Mathematical skills should be assessed in a way that does not focus on language and literacy skills.

5. Workplace communication skills

How are workplace communication skills included in Training Packages?

Although you will need to be familiar with all aspects of the Training Packages relevant to your industry, this book is mainly concerned with workplace communication.

As you discovered in Section 3, the communication skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and maths are needed for all jobs at all levels. When the Commonwealth and State ministers of education and training were developing policy around the Training Packages, they all decided that workplace communication had to be incorporated.

That is why it is now a formal requirement that all Competency Standards in a Training Package include information about the communication skills needed for satisfactory performance of work roles and tasks. Good practice in Standards development involves incorporation of language, literacy and numeracy throughout the Unit, however, there are other models. Below are examples of the following 5 approaches:

1. Communication skills are integrated with technical skills into all parts of the Unit.
2. A whole Unit relates to communication skills only.
3. A whole Element contains communication skills.

4. Separate Performance Criteria cover communication skills.
5. The Range of Variables and Evidence Guide statements refer to communication skills.

1. Communication skills are integrated with technical skills into all parts of the Unit

An example, of language, literacy and numeracy integrated into the performance criteria of the standards and then effectively supported by detailed Range Statements and Evidence guide is this unit from the Community Services and Health Standards.

AC2 Assist with aged people's personal needs	
Assisting aged people to meet daily living needs including nourishment, mobility, personal hygiene and other support within the plan of care.	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
1. Support the preferences of aged people within role and responsibility	• Personal preferences are identified in consultation with the aged person and accommodated, within organisational parameters • Aged people are supported and encouraged in exercising their rights and independence without compromising their safety and that of others • Appropriate communication and relationship building processes are used to identify the aged person's preferences and encourage independence • Factual information to identify the aged person's preferences is gathered • Short interpersonal exchanges, clarifying meaning and maintaining interaction to identify aged person's preferences are conducted
2. Provide assistance with aged people's personal needs	• Aged people's needs are identified and assistance is provided • Difficulties in meeting needs are clarified with the aged person where appropriate and addressed within organisational parameters • Processes and aids for providing assistance for aged people are identified and used as appropriate • Aged people are provided with information to assist in meeting their personal needs • Organisational policies and practices for reporting are followed as appropriate

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Range of variables

Personal needs may include providing assistance with

daily living including:

- maintaining personal safety
- communication (speech, writing, non-verbal communication)
- eating and drinking
- eliminating
- breathing
- mobilising and transferring (moving from place to place and position to position)
- attending to personal hygiene (bathing, laundering personal linen)
- dressing and undressing
- attending to own spiritual needs
- grooming and expressing sexuality.

physical/instrumental activities of daily living:

- accessing education and employment
- accessing financial resources and allowances
- paying bills and regular outgoings
- shopping
- preparing meals
- climbing stairs
- maintaining household (cleaning, laundry, decor, repairs)
- travelling by private and public transport
- interacting with others and socialising
- accessing leisure, recreational and sporting activities.

assisting with self-administration of medication according to:

- organisational practice and policy
- government regulation, policy and legislation
- instructions of the client, their advocate and/or the relevant professional/key worker.

Rights include:

- privacy
- confidentiality

- to be treated in a dignified, safe and comfortable manner
- to express own feelings.

Appropriate communication and relationship building processes may include:

- courtesy
- empathy
- non-judgemental manner
- listening
- treating the aged person as an individual
- respect for differences including:
  - cultural
  - physical
  - emotional
  - beliefs
  - customs
  - values
  - religions.

Factual information to identify aged person's preferences may be gathered by:

- asking questions
- observing aged person
- asking for clarification from aged person
- asking other relevant people such as relatives, friends, staff
- listening for relevant information concerning aged person's preferences.

Assistance may vary according to:

- the ability of the worker
- mental health
- physical health.

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Processes and aids may include:

- meals on wheels
- all equipment and aids
- transport services.

Reporting may include:

- changes in appearance and behaviour in accordance with reporting instructions.

Reporting may be to:

- supervisors
- colleagues
- health workers
- administrators
- health care services
- emergency services
- community care
- social services
- relatives.

Reporting may be via:

- telephone
- handover reports
- face-to-face
- written.

Evidence guide

Context of assessment

Assessment may be on-the-job or by simulation with the appropriate communication unit (COM1 or 2).

Assessors should particularly look for:

- understanding of and adherence to own role boundaries
- understanding of accountability and responsibility of supervisors and colleagues
- consultation with aged person, including asking questions, observing and listening. Understanding of aged person's rights and personal preferences would be indicated by an ability to list aged person's preferences or reflect the aged person's needs back to assessor
- consultation with other workers as relevant and as required.

Underpinning knowledge

- knowledge of and adherence to care plans
- common health problems of aged people and their effects
- different cultural requirements and preferences
- factors giving rise to grief and loss in the aged
- safety risks to aged people
- own role within organisational guidelines
- relevant plan of care and own role and responsibilities within it
- relevant policies, protocols, and practices of the organisation in relation to own work activities
- major components of different systems of the body
- common health problems of aged people and their effects
- processes of ageing
- reasons why some aged people are vulnerable to malnutrition and dehydration
- relevant medication guidelines such as:
  - Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council, *Integrated Best Practice Model for Medication Management in Residential Aged Care Facilities*, Feb. 1997 (this contains the following document)
  - Australian Nursing Federation Royal College of Nursing Australia Geriaction, *Nursing Guidelines for Medication Management in Nursing Homes and Hostels*, 1997
  - NSW Health Department, Circular 97/10 *Guidelines for the Handling of Medication in Community Based Health Services and Residential Facilities in New South Wales*, Jan. 1997
  - Aged Care Victoria, *The Administration of Hostel Medication*, Nov. 1996

Depending on the work role or services provided, specific knowledge of particular groups or issues may be required, including:

- alcohol and other drugs
- cultural and linguistic diversity
- risk of self harm
- women
- men community education
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- mental health.

Underpinning skills

- oral communication skills (language competence) required to fulfil job roles as specified by the organisation/service.

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- oral communication skills include asking questions, clarifying understanding of aged person's preferences, and expressing encouragement in communication.
- service/organisation may require competence in English or community language, depending on client group.
- reading and writing skills (literacy competence) required to fulfil job roles as specified by organisation/service.
- the level of skill may range from the ability to taking short messages or write a shopping list, to assisting aged persons with banking, reading of mail, etc.
- service/organisation may require competence in a language other than English, depending on client group.
- basic counselling.

Uncovering communication tasks

In this unit, language, literacy and numeracy competencies have been identified as important as parts of larger tasks but the reader of the standard will have uncovered the actual communication tasks that are expressed within the standard. The language, literacy and numeracy skills identified in the Underpinning skills section, are those that are crucial for the satisfactory performance of this workplace role function.

Information to inform the assessment of an element of competency can also be found as part of the Range Statements and Evidence Guide. This will be seen where language, literacy and numeracy has been included in the Units, Elements and Performance Criteria of the standard.

2. A whole Unit relates to communication skills only

This approach is likely to be used when communications tasks form a central workplace function. Such a stand-alone Unit may apply to a number of workplace roles. This example is about keeping workplace records from the Plastics, Rubber and Cablemaking Training Package

Maintain and organise workplace records	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
1. Record information	• Purpose of records to be maintained is identified in relation to customer requirements, quality system or production requirements • Requirements for completion of workplace records are identified in accordance with workplace procedures • Information is recorded and/or collated ensuring appropriate information and any samples are included in an appropriate manner
2. Maintain document filing arrangements	• Organisation system for records is identified • Records are filed following workplace conventions • Obsolete or non-conforming records are dealt with following workplace procedures
3. Respond to information requests	• Requests for information are interpreted and prioritised • Information requested is identified and provided within required workplace policies and time frames
4. Organise file movements	• Files to be relocated are identified • Records of movement are completed and filed following workplace procedures
5. Maintain security of workplace records	• Security requirements for workplace records are identified • Security arrangements are maintained for files • (Any) security breaches are notified to appropriate personnel

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3. A whole Element contains communication skills

Where communication skills are essential to the satisfactory performance of a whole workplace role, they are likely to be included as separate Elements. Performance Criteria will have been developed for the Element and there will be additional information in the Range of Variables and Evidence Guide. In this example, from the Retail Training Package, the Element 'Gather information' deals with communication skills.

Sell Products and Services	
This unit involves the use of sales techniques and encompasses the key selling skills from approaching the customer to closing the sale. It requires a basic level of product knowledge.	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
1. Apply Product Knowledge	• Knowledge of the use and application of relevant products and services demonstrated • Experienced sales staff or product information guide consulted to increase product knowledge
2. Approach Customer	• Timing of customer approach determined and applied • Effective sales approach identified and applied • Positive impression conveyed to arouse customer interest • Knowledge of customer buying behaviour demonstrated • Customer focused on specific merchandise
3. Gather Information	• **Questioning techniques applied to determine customer buying motives** • **Listening skills used to determine customer requirements** • **Non-verbal communication cues interpreted and clarified** • **Customers identified by name where possible**

Sell Products and Services	
This unit involves the use of sales techniques and encompasses the key selling skills from approaching the customer to closing the sale. It requires a basic level of product knowledge.	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
4. Sell Benefits	• Customer needs matched to appropriate products and services • Knowledge of products' features and benefits communicated clearly to customers • Product use and safety requirements described to customers • Customers referred to appropriate product specialist as required • Routine customer questions about merchandise (eg. price, price reductions, quality, usage) are answered accurately and honestly or referred to more experienced senior sales staff
5. Overcome Objections	• Customer objections identified and accepted • Objections categorised into price, time and merchandise characteristics • Solutions offered according to store policy • Problem solving applied to overcome customer objections
6. Close Sale	• Customer buying signals monitored, identified and responded to appropriately • Customer encouraged to make purchase decisions • Appropriate method of closing sale selected and applied
7. Maximise Sales Opportunities	• Opportunities for making additional sales recognised and applied • Customer advised of complementary products or services according to customer's identified need • Personal sales outcomes reviewed to maximise future sales

4. Separate Performance Criteria cover communication skills

When communication skills are critical for satisfactory performance of an Element, which may be quite technical, they may be included as separate Performance Criteria. The Range of Variables and Evidence Guide will provide additional information about training and assessment.

In this example, from the Forest Growing & Management Draft Standards, a specific performance criteria deals with organisational procedures an record keeping systems. There are quite specific literacy skills required for this.

Store & dispatch seed	
Description: This unit is concerned with storing seed in, and dispatching seed from, a seed store.	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
1. Store seed for later use	• Organisational occupational health & safety procedures, practices, policies, and precautions are observed and followed • **All seed information required by organisational procedures is recorded using the organisation's record keeping system** • Record the provenance of the seed in accordance with organisational guidelines • Seed is treated to prevent deterioration in accordance with seed species and/organisational procedures • Seed is packaged, accurately and clearly labelled, and placed in accordance with organisational procedures.

5. The Range of Variables and Evidence Guide statements refer to communication skills

Communication skills are not explicitly included in the Unit, Element or *Performance Criteria, but are covered in the Range of Variables and Evidence* Guide, which give clear information about the range of communication skills required and how those skills should be demonstrated In this example from the Transport and Distribution Training Package, communication skills required are listed in Variable 3.

Conduct Advanced Forklift Operations	
Load Handling	
Description: Select, fit and operate forklifts with specialised lifting attachments or all terrain equipment	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
1. Check attachments and worksite for suitability	• Suitable work site is selected for operations • Work area is checked for overhead obstructions and proximity to service delivery lines • Barriers or warning signs are erected in areas subject to passing traffic • Attachments and platforms are securely fixed to carriage or tines • Personnel support platforms are inspected to ensure compliance with the relevant Australian standard
2. Select type of forklift and accessories for required load shifting task	• Situations requiring special equipment or attachments identified to match load and work characteristics • Appropriate specialised equipment selected • Existing attachments removed and stored according to workplace procedures • Specialised equipment fitted according to manufacturer's instructions and workplace procedures • Designated staff notified regarding specialist operations

Conduct Advanced Forklift Operations	
Load Handling	
Description: Select, fit and operate forklifts with specialised lifting attachments or all terrain equipment	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
3. *Shift load and complete work*	• Equipment is operated with safe working limits and to maximise efficiency of operations • Load is lifted, carried and set down in accordance with workplace and manufacturer's procedures and legislative requirements • Documentation is completed reporting any damage or faults to goods or equipment • Specialist equipment and forklift returned to appropriate storage/parking area

Range of Variables

General context

Work is performed under some supervision, generally within a team/group environment

Customers may be internal or external

Enterprises may comprise large, medium or small worksites

Work may be undertaken in various work environments involved in warehousing, storage and distribution

Equipment may be used for stock handling, information storage and gathering computerised warehouse equipment

Worksite environment may include:

- Operations conducted by day or night
- Work may be conducted in restricted spaces or exposed conditions, controlled or open environments, or even or uneven, wet or dry surfaces
- Exposure to chemicals, dangerous or hazardous substances and movements of equipment, goods and vehicles
- Personnel in work area may include company personnel, site visitors, contractors, official representatives
- The use of a range of attachments:
  - Spikes

- Drum carriers
- Bale carriers
- Tines
- Personnel carriers
- Height reaching pantograph
- Jibs
- Paper clamps
- Hooks
- Side lifters

Sources of information/ documents may include:

- Goods identification numbers and codes
- Manifests
- Picking slips, merchandise transfers, stock requisitions and bar codes
- Manufacturer's specifications
- Company operating procedures and policies
- Supplier and/or client instructions
- Materials Safety Data Sheets
- Phone, Electronic Data Interchange, fax, e-mail, internet, radio, oral, aural or signed communications
- Codes of Practice Legislation and regulations
- Award, Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, other industrial arrangements
- Standards and certification requirements
- Quality assurance procedures
- Australian Standard 2359 - Industrial Truck Code

Workplace context may include:

- Work organisation procedures and practices
- Conditions of service, legislation and industrial agreements including:
  - workplace agreements and awards
  - Occupational Health and Safety
  - State, Federal or Territory Legislation
  - Consultative processes may involve:
  - staff members
  - management

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- union representatives
- industrial relations, Occupational Health and Safety specialists
- other professional or technical staff

Activity: Communication skills in your industry Competency Standards

How are communication skills included in the Competency Standards you will be working with? Can you find examples of some of these models?

The 5 models for including communication skills in the Competency Standards	Examples from the Competency Standards you use
1. Communication skills are integrated with technical skills into all parts of the Unit.	
2. A whole Unit relates to communication skills only.	
3. A whole Element contains communication skills.	
4. Separate Performance Criteria cover communication skills.	
5. The Range of Variables and Evidence Guide statements refer to communication skills.	

Identifying communication skills in the Competency Standards

You will need to analyse the Standards you will be using to know what communication skills are required and how these skills must be demonstrated in the workplace. Make sure you know **exactly** what is required to demonstrate competency to the required level. If there are whole Units of communication skills–for example, *Communicate in the workplace* or *Interact with clients (Information Technology Client Support Training Package)*—you might need to seek help from a language, literacy and numeracy expert to plan and conduct the training and assessment. If the communication skills are included at the Element or Performance Criteria level, or if they are only mentioned in the Range of Variables and Evidence Guide, you might not need expert help.

Finally, you should treat communication skills content in the Standards in the same way you would treat any other content—seek expert help if you are not sure exactly what would be required to demonstrate competency.

Activity: Identifying language, literacy and numeracy in Standards

Use the following questions to help identify language, literacy and numeracy requirements for several Units of Competency in the Standards you are planning to use.

1. What do people have to listen to and understand?
2. What do they have to say?
3. What do they have to read?
4. What do they have to write?
5. Do they need to understand any diagrams, pictures or symbols?
6. What maths calculations do they need to do?

6. Communication skills and training

Standards, trainees and training materials

In planning and delivering your training program, you will need to think about the following:

- the communications skills specified in the Competency Standards you are using
- the communication skills expertise of your trainees
- the communication required in your training materials and methods.
- the communication skills needed for mentoring and training the trainer.

Strategies and resources for all training

The following table gives a summary of possible strategies and materials which are likely to be appropriate for different groups of trainees, whether or not the training content includes communication skills.

Strategies and resources for all training		
About the trainees	**Possible learning strategies**	**Suitable resource materials**
High levels of language, literacy, numeracy. No particular cultural issues.	Any which are suitable for the standards and training context.	Any which are suitable for the standards and training context.
Lack of fluency in spoken/written English. Language background other than English.	Delivery in first language. Interpreter to support delivery. ESL teacher to deliver program. Practical demonstrations: showing rather than talking or reading about the content.	Written materials in first language. Simple, plain-English versions of any written materials. Signs, pictures, graphics rather than words where possible.
Cross-cultural communication issues. Language background other than English.	Research cultural background of trainees. Delivery strategies to match cultural preferences where possible.	Materials to be culturally appropriate, culturally inclusive, eg. Include examples related to trainees' cultural background where possible.
Low reading, writing, numeracy levels: • incomplete education • language background other than English • intellectual disability • learning disability.	Delivery strategies which rely as little as possible on written materials, eg. practical demonstrations, discussion.	If written materials are needed on the job, write materials in plain English. Use audio or video tapes if possible. Use signs, pictures and graphics rather than words. Read written material to the trainee. Provide a writer.

Strategies and resources for Standards containing language, literacy and numeracy

As a trainer/assessor, you will need to:

1. Identify the language, literacy and numeracy aspects of the Competency Standards you are using.
2. Ensure that training materials and learning activities explicitly address the identified language, literacy and numeracy aspects.
3. Ensure that assessment strategies and tasks explicitly address the language, literacy and numeracy aspects.
4. Ensure that professional development for trainers and assessors includes sufficient information on how to deal with language, literacy and numeracy in the Standards.

Working with language, literacy and numeracy experts

Partnerships with language, literacy and numeracy practitioners need to be made according to:

- the way in which communication skills are included in the Standards
- the particular communication needs of your trainees.

For Competency Units which are stand-alone communication skills Units, such as the Retail Training Package Element 'Gather information' in Section 5 of this book, you should seek help from a language, literacy or numeracy expert regardless of the communication skills level of your trainees.

For Competency Units which have communication skills included at the Element level or below, you might need expert help, depending on the communication skills levels of your trainees. If you have trainees with particular language, literacy or numeracy problems, you might want to seek some expert help in preparing and/or delivering your program.

Some of the things you may need to do are:

- Develop clear messages to management to explain the benefits of working in partnership with language and literacy specialists.
- Take part in a language, literacy and numeracy and/or cross-cultural awareness program.
- Work with a language, literacy and numeracy expert to identify training needs.

- Provide information sessions to language, literacy and numeracy experts on the technical content of training.
- Work alongside a language, literacy and numeracy expert during assessment for aspects that primarily concern communication skills.
- Assist language, literacy and numeracy experts to access workplace documents which employees need to read or write.
- Work with a language, literacy and numeracy expert to produce customised learning resources.
- Use advice from language, literacy and numeracy experts when developing internal memos, letters and newsletters.
- Work with a language, literacy and numeracy expert to rewrite, in plain English, material such as safety procedures, instructions and operating manuals.

Different models

There are a range of possible models for working with experts including:

1. The **language support** model, where the expert is used to support the trainer/trainees between sessions and in completing any follow-up tasks.
2. The **team-teaching** model, where the language expert works together with the content expert in the classroom.
3. The **language expert working alone** model, used for stand-alone communication skills Competency Units.

Activity: Language support model

This model uses a language/literacy expert to help the trainee with their communication skills between training sessions.

Mile is a supervisor at a packaging manufacturing company. He has been working in the company since he arrived in Australia 17 years ago. The company is undergoing a period of workplace change and has decided its supervisors should undertake the Certificate of Workplace Leadership to prepare themselves for the changes in their roles in the company. Mile has not undertaken any formal education in Australia and finished only primary school in his own country. In order to make the training more effective, a language/literacy expert attended the Certificate of Workplace Leadership sessions–conducted by a vocational trainer, and then met with the supervisors between sessions—in small groups and individually—to assist them in the follow-up to the sessions, including any assessment tasks they had to undertake.

Discussion

As Mile has had limited school education, what kind of support is he likely to need from the trainer?

How could the trainer get help from a language/literacy expert to make the training materials accessible to trainees like Mile?

Notes to the trainer

The trainer should give a clear explanation of what is to be learnt and assessed, and information about the learning methods to be used. Training materials should not have too much written content.

The language/literacy expert could assist the trainer in writing materials which were in plain, easy-to-understand English.

Activity: Team-teaching model

Ideally, in the team-teaching model, the two trainers—content expert and literacy/numeracy expert—will meet before each session to discuss their training plan for the lesson and will integrate their content material.

The following example describes a situation where it was felt appropriate to bring in a language expert to assist with the training of a group of Australian-born employees with low literacy skills. In this case, it is necessary to be aware of the particular problems which people with low levels of literacy may have: in particular, their low self-esteem and lack of confidence. It is also necessary to remember that many of these employees have been performing their tasks well and may have hidden their literacy or specific learning disability from their employer. The issue of confidentiality arises in these cases.

> *Len is employed in a transport and distribution company. He left school early and has been working in the industry for many years. He is a native speaker of English but his reading and writing skills are extremely limited. The company is aware of the language difficulties of some of its employees and wants to ensure that they all get their forklift licences. Because of the communication skills required in the Evidence Guide of the Competency Standard 'Operate a Forklift', they have to ensure the language of the training program is accessible to the employees. The vocational trainer and the language trainer from the local TAFE Institute meet to plan the program. The language teacher conducts individual language assessments before the course starts to find out about any communications problems.*

They reassure employees of the confidential nature of this process. Each week the two teachers meet before the lesson to plan the material they will deliver to the class. This involves some rewriting of the training materials. The language teacher undertakes the training for the licence test herself so that she is aware of the difficulties the employees may have, not just in meeting the performance criteria but also in gaining their licences. At the end of the 88 hour program, all of the employees successfully gain their licences.

In this case, the trainer has called in the language expert to design the learning materials so that they are accessible to the trainee. This has involved a preliminary assessment of the communication skills of the trainee, preparation of the written materials in language which is meaningful to the trainee—in conjunction with a content expert—and, finally, the theory assessment has been conducted orally to give the trainee the best chance of successfully demonstrating his knowledge.

Discussion

What can you do when team-teaching is not possible?

What are some of the problems/benefits about working with language, literacy and numeracy experts?

Activity: Language expert working alone model

If there is a stand-alone Unit on communication skills in your Competency Standards, you may need to call in a language expert. The role of the expert would be to assess the level of communications skills of your trainees and to devise a language program which will address the Unit.

Teaching the Unit, 'Maintain and Organise Workplace Records'

Boris is a process worker at a polymer product manufacturing company. The company is in the process of developing a training program for its employees. Most of the employees undertaking the Unit Maintain and Organise Workplace Records have been in Australia for 20 years or more and have incomplete secondary schooling in their own country. The communication skills/language teacher assesses them before starting the training to ascertain their levels of English, particularly their reading and writing skills. She then designs the training, taking account of their language needs as well as the competencies of the Maintain and Organise Workplace

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Records Unit. The training is customised to the particular language needs of this group of employees using the documents required in this workplace. At the end of the Unit, the employees are assessed against the Performance Criteria.

In this case, the communication unit is a stand-alone unit which all employees have to undertake. The program is delivered using materials from the workplace with which it is expected the trainees will have some familiarity. Because the program is customised to the workplace, the activities are meaningful and of immediate usefulness. The assessment is conducted in the workplace.

Summary checklist for trainers

You can use the following checklist to see if you are fully prepared to take account of workplace communication skills in conducting training:

About the standards...

- Are there any Competency Units which deal solely with communication skills?
- Are there any Competency Units which have communication skills included at the Element level?
- Which Competency Units have communication skills included only at the Performance Criteria level?

About the trainees...

- Do you have trainees from a non-English-speaking background?
- Do you have trainees who have literacy/numeracy difficulties?
- Do you have trainees with a specific learning disability?
- Are there any cultural issues which you need to consider?
- How do people from the trainees' culture/s feel about education and training?
- Is gender an important factor?

About the trainer... .

- Have you completed workplace communication skills awareness training?
- Do you need help from a language/literacy expert to assess the communication skills of your trainees before you start training?
- Do you need help from a language/literacy expert to teach the communication skills in the competency standards?

7. Communication skills and assessment

Assessment as a process

Assessment is a process rather than a single event. Designing and developing assessment materials, tasks and tools is a part of the whole assessment process. The workplace communication skills of standards, candidates and assessors must be considered at each stage in the process.

You can use the following questions to see if you are fully prepared to take account of workplace communication skills in conducting an assessment.

About the Standards

- Are there any Units of Competency which deal solely with communication skills?
- Are there any Units of Competency which have communication skills included at the Element level?
- Which Units of Competency have communication skills included only at the Performance Criteria level?
- What communication skills are required for each of the assessment tasks you intend to use?
- Are all of the communication skills required to complete all the assessment tasks included in the Standards?

About the candidate

- Does the candidate have any particular communication difficulties?
- How might the candidate's communication difficulties affect the assessment process, methods and tasks?
- What strategies will you use to ensure the candidate is:
  - informed and prepared for the assessment
  - able to play an active part in negotiating all the assessment details
  - supported through the assessment tasks
  - informed of the outcome of the assessment?

About the assessor

- Have you completed workplace communication skills awareness training?
- Do you need help from a literacy expert to assess stand-alone communication skills Units of Competency?
- Do you need help from a literacy expert to develop assessment tasks to cover a whole communication skills Element?
- Do you need help from a literacy expert to check assessment tasks you have developed to cover the communication skills included in the Performance Criteria of technical elements?

About the assessment materials

- Are the materials being given to a candidate user-friendly?
- Do the materials include any explicit information about how to deal with communication skills issues?
- Could the assessment materials be easily modified to suit candidates with a range of communication skills difficulties?
- Do the assessment materials require language, literacy and/or numeracy skills over and above the level in the standard/s they are designed to assess?
- Are the materials written in plain English?
- Do the materials include pictures and graphics to supplement text?
- Do the materials have any particular cultural bias?
- Do the materials themselves require assessors to have particular communication skills?

The principles of assessment

Four main principles underpin best practice in assessment:

1. Validity.

2. Fairness.

3. Reliability.

4. Flexibility.

These principles apply to the assessment process and to any materials used to make the assessment judgement.

While all the principles are important, they overlap a bit. In order to be valid and fair in the way they take account of communication skills, your assessment processes and materials will need to be flexible. Likewise, if they are valid, fair and flexible, they will be reliable when used by assessors who have sufficient awareness of communication skills issues.

1. Validity

To be valid the assessment process and assessment materials must assess everything they claim to assess, and nothing else.

When designing and using assessment tasks, you need to ensure the tasks:

- **will** provide evidence about all the workplace communication skills which are included in the standards
- **will not** require any extra communication skills which are not included in the competency unit/s being assessed.

Assessment tasks can have 'built-in' communication skills

Many assessment tasks have built-in communication skills requirements due to the nature of the task itself. It is very easy to make the mistake of setting up an assessment task in which you are assessing communication skills you did not need or intend to assess.

For example, to complete an assessment task requiring short, written answers to questions, a candidate needs reading and writing skills as well as a knowledge of the answers. If reading and writing skills are not included in the Standards, they should not be required for the assessment. A more valid approach in this case would be to simply ask the questions verbally. **The assessor** might need to write down the answers, in order to have a full record of the assessment, but there is no need for the candidate to read or write anything.

Getting expert help

Where workplace communication skills are central to the workplace task being assessed, it would be appropriate for the assessment tasks to require these skills. In these cases, you should consult a communication skills expert to ensure the assessment tasks fully cover the particular workplace communication skills to the level required and no more.

Without communication skills expertise, it can be difficult to set assessment tasks which include communication skills at the appropriate level.

What can I do to help me identify the language/literacy/numeracy requirements of a competency standard?

"national competency standards cover the entire range of work functions required in an industry. Standard documents express competencies as workplace tasks. For these documents to truly reflect workplace requirements it is crucial that underlying skills, knowledge and core competencies, such as language/literacy/numeracy are included" (*Workplace communication in National Training Packages*, Fitzpatrick and Roberts, 1997, p.13)

As a workplace assessor, you are responsible for confirming that an employee can do the job to the standard required by the industry. Workplace assessment is about workplace tasks and the language/literacy/numeracy skills involved in successfully completing those tasks.

Planning the assessment

When you are **planning the assessment,** you need to be aware of two things relating to language/literacy/numeracy:

1. The language/literacy/numeracy requirements of the Competency Standard you are assessing.
2. The language/literacy/numeracy required by the tool you are using (does the tool assess what you set to assess: that is, the employee's ability in relation to the Competency and NOT their language/literacy/numeracy skills).

The language/literacy/numeracy requirements in some competencies are clearly stated. In the following example of a Competency Standard, the numeracy requirements are quite clear:

> **Perform computations**
>
> **Criteria include:**
>
> **Check calculated answers by estimating techniques**
>
> **Perform simple rounding off operations when estimating**

In other competencies, the language/literacy/numeracy requirements are part of the workplace tasks and must be assessed as such, for example:

> **Communicate information about tasks, processes, events or skills**

In the Range Statement for this Unit, it is stated that application in most workplaces would require a basic level of ability in speaking, reading and writing English as well as basic numeracy. To assess this appropriately, the focus must be

on the workplace literacy required by the job. To assess language/literacy/numeracy in an unreal context may not be valid.

To assist you in working out the language/literacy/numeracy requirements of a competency, ask yourself the following questions:

- What do candidates have to listen to or read?
- What do they have to write or say?
- Do they need to do some maths calculation? Read/understand a drawing? For what purpose?
- Remember that you are not expected to be a language/literacy/numeracy expert. As with other areas of expertise, if you need assistance you should call in specialist support (see Section 5).

2. Fairness

For an assessment to be fair, candidates must know exactly what they have to be able to do. They should also have a say in how and when they will show they can do it.

What *you* need to do for a fair assessment

In order to make sure communication problems and issues do not unfairly affect the assessment process or outcome, an assessor must be able to:

- explain the purpose of the assessment and all the stages of the process, including the appeals and reassessment procedures, in a way the candidate understands
- explain the Standards clearly and simply so the candidate knows exactly what they must show they can do
- encourage the candidate to play an active part in deciding how their assessment will be done: when, where and how evidence will be collected
- identify candidates with special needs relating to workplace communication
- use a range of strategies to cater for any special communication needs.

A fair assessment is one in which the candidate is able to perform at their best. People perform at their best when they know what they have to do and feel confident of their ability to do it. Communicating with the candidate—before, during and after the assessment, in a way which takes account of their cultural background and level of communication skills—can have a big effect on how the candidate performs.

Activity: Fair go in assessment

Discussion of this case study can be used to:

(a) look at fairness in assessment

(b) identify cross-cultural communication issues in assessment.

Lan is Vietnamese. He has lived in Australia for 25 years. His wife is Vietnamese and they have six children.

Lan needed to get his forklift ticket. He was given some questions to study. Lan decided to do the assessment orally. His English was not very good, so he asked for help to prepare for the assessment. His helper wrote the questions in plain English so he could understand them. Done this way, Lan could answer each question well.

On the day of the assessment, the assessor refused to read the plain English questions as that would 'not be fair to all the other candidates'. Lan had difficulty and asked the assessor for the number of the question he was reading. This way Lan could read the plain English copy and give an answer. The assessor also refused to do this. At times, the assessor asked more probing questions than were on the sheet.

When Lan answered a question correctly, the assessor answered "I can live with that". Lan remained silent when he did not understand the question; he felt it would be impolite to keep asking the assessor to repeat the question and Lan could sense that the assessor was getting impatient. When Lan remained silent, the assessor did too.

Lan was found to be 'not yet competent'.

Discussion

What was the attitude of the assessor?

How would this affect the candidate?

Is it 'fair' and 'valid' for Lan to have plain-English questions?

What cross-cultural communication problems affected this assessment?

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Notes for trainers/assessors

For ideas regarding cross-cultural communication, see Section 3.

For discussion on fairness in assessment, see information on reasonable adjustment in Section 7.

Additional factors which ensure a fair assessment process

Clear information in plain English

Candidates needs to be well informed about the Competency Standards and what to expect at all stages in the assessment process. They should help decide how, when and where evidence will be collected. Information needs to be given clearly and simply. As an assessor, you become very familiar with lots of technical details to do with the assessment process. You need to keep in mind that candidates, even those with good reading and writing skills, might find it hard to understand the 'language of assessment' which seems so clear to you.

Choosing the right level of communication

Make sure you are very clear about the kinds and levels of communication skills required by the standards. Take them as your guide to the right communication level to use. Choose ways to do the assessment and inform the candidate about the assessment, which do not require the candidate to have communication skills above the level included in the Standards.

This will be hardest to do when the Standards require very low levels of communication skills. It will be easier when the Standards themselves require high levels of communication skills.

If you are not clear exactly what is meant by anything in the Standards relating to communication skills, you should seek help from a communications expert, just as you would seek help from a technical expert if you needed help interpreting some technical aspect of the Standards.

It is a complex matter, even for a communications expert, to accurately assess someone's level of communication skills. As an assessor, you are not expected to make detailed judgements about a candidate's communication skills levels aside from the requirements of the Standards being assessed.

Activity: Plain English

Re-write the following assessment questions and answers in plain English.

Assessment questions	
Question	**Answer**
Element 1.1	
1. What precautions should be taken by the operator when a leak in the fuel system is suspected or detected?	The machine should be immediately stopped, the leak reported to an authorised person and an appropriate sign displayed on the unit.
2. What important function does a back rest form on a forklift truck?	A back rest stops the load from fouling the mast and prevents load falling onto the operator.
Element 1.2	
3. What direction must the load face when travelling uphill?	The forklift truck must travel up the ramp forward—therefore the load must face uphill.
4. Why is it unsafe to run a forklift when it is on a ramp or sloping surface?	Because lateral stability is affected, the vehicle could overturn or the load could slide.
5. What direction must the load face when travelling downhill?	The forklift truck must travel down in reverse—therefore the load must face uphill.
6. What is the minimum distance you should keep your forklift truck and load away from power lines?	2 metres from distribution lines on poles, 6 metres from transmission lines on towers, closer if lines are covered.

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Notes to trainer/assessor

The version below demonstrates how the Assessment questions above could be rewritten in plain English.

Assessment questions	
Question	**Answer**
Element 1.1	
1. What must you do if you think you have a leak in the fuel system?	Stop the machine straight away. Report it to your supervisor. Tag the machine.
2. Why does a forklift have a back rest (load guard)?	It stops the load falling onto the mast and the driver.
Element 1.2	
3. What direction must the load face when travelling uphill?	The load must face uphill.
4. You must not turn a forklift when it is on a slope. Why not?	It becomes unstable. The forklift might turn over. The load might slide.
5. What direction must the load face when you drive downhill?	The load must face uphill—so you must drive in reverse.
6. How close can you drive to power lines?	2m away from distribution lines on poles, and 6m away from transmission lines. You can only drive closer if the lines are covered.

Identifying candidates with special communication needs

There are many different kinds of special needs a candidate might have relating to language, literacy and numeracy. It is important for you to find out about any special communication needs as soon as possible—even before your first meeting to discuss assessment with the candidate if possible.

See the beginning of Section 4 of this kit for a summary of the kinds of language, literacy and numeracy difficulties you might have to deal with and the ways in which these problems are often combined.

You can find out about any special communication needs by:

- asking the supervisor/team leader/trainer if they are aware of anything which might affect the assessment
- asking the candidate if there is any aspect of the assessment which worries them or which they think they will need help with
- noticing potential problems yourself by being aware of language, literacy and numeracy difficulties and the kinds of strategies candidates might use to deal with them.

Strategies for dealing with communication difficulties

The concept of 'reasonable adjustment' means the assessment process is modified so individual candidates are not disadvantaged. Different language literacy and/or numeracy problems require different kinds of adjustments.

The following table gives examples of reasonable adjustments you might make for different groups of candidates with language, literacy and/or numeracy problems.

Strategies and resources for all training		
About the trainees	**Possible learning strategies**	**Suitable resource materials**
High levels of language, literacy, numeracy. No particular cultural issues.	Any which are suitable for the standards and training context.	Any which are suitable for the standards and training context.
Lack of fluency in spoken/written English. Language background other than English.	Delivery in first language. Interpreter to support delivery. ESL teacher to deliver program. Practical demonstrations: showing rather than talking or reading about the content.	Written materials in first language. Simple, plain-English versions of any written materials. Signs, pictures, graphics rather than words where possible.

Strategies and resources for all training		
About the trainees	**Possible learning strategies**	**Suitable resource materials**
Cross-cultural communication issues. Language background other than English.	Research cultural background of trainees. Delivery strategies to match cultural preferences where possible.	Materials to be culturally appropriate and/or culturally inclusive, eg. Include examples related to trainees' cultural background where possible.
Low reading, writing, numeracy levels: • incomplete education • language background other than English • intellectual disability • learning disability.	Delivery strategies which rely as little as possible on written materials, eg. practical demonstrations, discussion.	If written materials are needed on the job, write materials in plain English. Use audio or video tapes if possible. Use signs, pictures and graphics rather than words Read written material to the candidate. Provide a writer.

You might need to seek help from a communications expert to ensure a fair assessment for some candidates. Assessors who have done a communications awareness course will be much better able to tell when and where to seek expert help.

3. Reliability

For reliability, the outcome of the assessment must be consistent for different assessors, candidates and situations. This means that for all candidates who have the same level of skills to be assessed, the outcome will be the same regardless of who does the assessing and when and where the assessment is done.

For your assessments to be reliable, you must know enough about communication skills to develop assessment materials, and plan and conduct assessments, in ways which are fair and valid.

4. Flexibility

For assessment to be flexible, it must take account of the skills a candidate has, regardless of when where and how those skills were learnt. As far as possible the assessment itself should be conducted when and how it suits the candidate.

To be flexible in your assessment practice, you need to develop and use strategies and materials which suit the communication skills level of the candidate.

Activity: Reasonable adjustment

This case study can be used to:

(a) discuss aspects of 'reasonable adjustment' (changes in the way you do things) to meet the special needs of the individual candidate.

(b) discuss how to maintain the validity, flexibility, fairness and reliability of the assessment process.

Bullock Steel Fabricators were implementing competency standards in their enterprise. The human resource manager decided it was essential for all employees to be assessed for classification purposes. There was a lot of consultation with the union and agreement was finally reached.

Assessors were trained and assessments started. The same assessment tool was used for all workers, a written questionnaire to assess knowledge and a 'show and tell' session on the machine to show skill.

Fatima, an Arabic worker who could not read/write English, arrived for the test. During her assessment, the assessor read the questions and wrote the answers. He was very careful to read exactly what was on the paper and to write exactly what Fatima said.

Later, Fatima was talking to other workers. She said how grateful she was that the assessor had supported her through the assessment by reading and writing for her. She knew all the information, but was sure she would have failed if she had not had this assistance.

The other workers were angry. This was not fair. It should be the same for everyone. That afternoon, all assessments were cancelled and a meeting was called immediately to discuss the matter with the Union.

Discussion

What was the 'reasonable adjustment' made for Fatima?

Do you think the actions of the workplace assessor made the assessment invalid, unreliable or unfair?

What does 'flexibility' in assessment mean?

As a follow-up to the above discussion, ask trainers to think about/write down examples of other candidates' 'special needs' and the reasonable adjustments that could be used in their workplace assessments.

What are some of the issues regarding the use of interpreters?

What are the potential problems in asking a workmate to interpret?

- Issues of confidentiality, eg. does the candidate want a fellow worker to know what happened during the assessment? How can you ensure that the interpreter does not make the assessment the topic of discussion on the factory floor?
- Not everyone who speaks a language can interpret effectively.
- Individuals may overestimate the command of their language and ability to interpret in a formal assessment situation, eg. they may be OK day-to-day communication but an assessment requires very precise and accurate interpreting if the candidate is not to be disadvantaged.
- Personal aspects, eg. friendship (or antagonism) between the candidate and interpreter may effect the assessment…is it fair, valid and reliable?
- Political/religious antagonism that may divide groups of similar ethnic backgrounds may affect the assessment.
- Some countries have many languages and dialects, and you can not assume that people from the same country can understand each other, eg. Cantonese and Mandarin speakers can both come from China but they do not understand each other if they are not bilingual.

Should a professionally qualified interpreter be used?

You may wish to use a professional interpreter for the assessment. The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) has a directory of translators (for written material) and interpreters (for oral interpretation) you can call on. There are also federal, state and private agencies who provide accredited interpreters or translators on a fee-for-services basis (see information on next page).

Some of the issues involved in using professional interpreters:

- You do not have to deal with the potential problems associated with asking a workmate to interpret for the candidate.
- It supports the principles of a valid, fair and reliable assessment.
- It needs to be organised in advance.

- You need to know exactly what language the candidate is fluent in. For example, deaf people who use sign language may require an Auslan interpreter or a Signed-English interpreter.
- It adds costs to the assessment process.

Providers of interpreting/translation services

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Translating and Interpreting Service Tel: 131 450

The Department provides an interpreting and translation service both on site and **over the telephone.** Some services are on a fee-for-service basis.

You can also contact the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in your state. Check the telephone directory for local numbers.

National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) (check your telephone directory)

NAATI is an accreditation authority for interpreters. They have a directory of interpreters and translators and will make referrals on request.

SBS

SBS has a translation service for the audio, video and text materials. They do not offer an interpreter service as does the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, but will provide consultancy service regarding cultural issues and aspects relating to interpreting at conferences, meetings etc. Their main area of involvement is media.

Interpreting/translation services are also available from state agencies (eg. Department of Ethnic Affairs or Ethnic Affairs Commission), and private providers. Please check your telephone directory.

Activity: Use of interpreters

This case study can be used to:

(a) discuss the issue of using an interpreter

(b) discuss cross-cultural factors and how they affect an assessment.

Jing is Chinese. She has been in Australia for one year. She works in the production area. She has engineering qualifications, but they are not recognised in Australia. She speaks English well enough to get her by in her job. Whenever the supervisor needs to give her instructions, he uses plain English, as few words as possible and a lot

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of gestures. The factory is implementing competency standards. Jing has done a self-assessment and rated her competencies way below her work performance. The supervisor wants her assessed.

The assessment is organised and the assessor decides than an interpreter will be provided so that Jing gets a fair go. The supervisor is asked to organise an interpreter, so asks Wang Yong, the only other Chinese worker in the plant, to fulfil that role.

On the day of the assessment, Jing arrives at the plant. She does not know there will be an interpreter present. At the start of the assessment, Wang Yong is called in. Neither the supervisor or the assessor are aware of the fact that Wang Yong speaks a different dialect to Jing. Neither Jing nor Wang Yong could say anything. The assessment proceeds.

Discussion

What cultural factors are involved here?

What impact do you think this will have on Jing's assessment performance?

How could this situation been avoided?

Jing did not know that there would be an interpreter. How can the assessment procedures be improved to overcome this?

8. Assessment tasks in Training Packages

Evaluation criteria

In Section 5, the following questions were listed to check whether assessment materials enable fair, valid, reliable and flexible assessment of a candidate.

1. Are the materials being given to a candidate user-friendly?
2. Do the materials include any explicit information about how to deal with communication skills issues?
3. Could the assessment materials be easily modified to suit candidates with a range of communication skills difficulties?
4. Do the assessment materials require language, literacy and/or numeracy skills over and above the level in the standard/s they are designed to assess?
5. Are the materials written in plain English?
6. Do the materials include pictures and graphics to supplement text?
7. Do the materials have any particular cultural bias?
8. Do the materials themselves require assessors to have particular communication skills?

Activity: Evaluating assessment tasks

On the next pages are some examples of assessment tasks from Training Packages. Note that some of them are from draft versions of Training Package publications which may be altered before final distribution. Photocopy the questions above, then use them to evaluate one or more of the assessment tasks below. An example has been completed for you.

Sample Assessment Task 1

This is part of a curriculum that maps directly against the relevant industry standards in the Retail Training Package.

Certificate II in Retail Operations	
Retail Documentation and Calculations	
LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA DETAILS	
Learning Outcomes	**Assessment Criteria**
1. Interpret retail documents in a workplace context	1.1 List and describe a range of retail documents accurately 1.2 Read and interpret a range of retail documents 1.3 Complete retail documents in line with store policy 1.4 Act on information and instruction contained in retail store documents as required
2. Use numbers in the workplace	2.1 List the range of numerical problems encountered in the ret ail workplace 2.2 Collect numerical information from various sources and accurately calculate outcomes, with or without a calculator 2.3 Complete a range of numerical exercises using: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, percentages
Assessment Methods	**Conditions of Assessment**
Off-the-job Short answers questions, written or oral, action learning project *On-the-job* Practical demonstration of numeracy skills Practical demonstration of reading and document interpretation skills Where possible, all learning outcomes should be assessed as integrated components of the entire module	*On-the-job or Off-the-job* The learner will have access to: real or simulated work task • Information on: - workplace calculations - workplace documents • equipment and information *On-the-job* The learner will have access to: • a real retail work environment • common calculations used for customer service

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The following is part of the trainer and assessor guide that accompanies the Retail Training Package.

Guide to module assessment

	❑	Have you coached the learner to:
Learning outcomes:		
	1	Interpret retail documents in a workplace context.
	2	Use numbers in the workplace.
	❑	Can they complete the following assessment task:

Seek Evidence

You will need evidence that the candidate can:

- understand all the documents which they have to deal with: for example, lay by slips, credit slips, receipts, invoices, stock sheets, policies
- can perform calculations relevant to their jobs: for example, a 15% reduction on an item, the staged payments on a lay-by, the price per item of a totalled invoice, the total price of a number of items purchased.

Assessment Task

Below is a sample assessment task. You may ask the candidate to complete this task so they can produce the evidence that is required to demonstrate their competency or you can use this task as a guide to develop your own assessment activity.

Sample Assessment Task

Have the candidate complete the following tasks. For these situations, the candidate should select the correct document and complete it.

- Judy wants to buy this dress on lay by. It costs $82.00. She has to pay a 20% deposit.
- Harry returns the $52.00 electric kettle he bought for his mum because his dad gave her one too. He wants to get a credit note so that she can choose something else.

- Lee has purchased a number of items at the delicatessen. Which of the answers for each is correct?

100 grams of salami @ $8.00 per kilo =	$1.20	80c	$4.00
200 grams of cheddar cheese @ $12.00 per kilo =	$2.40	60c	$3.00
150 grams of leg ham @$13.00 per kilo =	$1.95	$8.20	$2.60
4 cartons of yoghurt @ $1.05 per carton =	$4.00	$5.00	$4.20
one dozen bread rolls @ 42c per roll =	$4.20	$5.04	$8.40

She pays with a $20.00 note. Write out what the docket will look like using the correct answers from above.

- Paola is returning a hairdryer which is faulty. She paid $22.50 for it two days ago. It smells like burning rubber whenever she turns it on. Complete the product slip.
- Write out an invoice on behalf of your supplier for a delivery of 10 dozen glasses.
- If the entire invoice from the supplier for 3 dozen bottles of wine is $306.00, how much would each bottle cost? If the retailer normally adds a 75% mark up, how much would the public pay for each bottle? Write a ticket advertising it at 50% off normal retail price.
- Tim wants to buy his new girlfriend a CD, but he's scared that he'll display his ignorance about music so he decides to get a gift voucher. He doesn't really want to pay more than $30.00 and most CDs cost @ $29.50.
- Complete the order form for infant's socks. The store policy is to display five pairs of each size 000, 00, 0, 1, 2 and 3 in each colour: red, black and blue. They also keep five pairs of each colour in each size in the stock room. A current audit indicates the following:

Sock	Display	Stock
Red 000	1	2
Red 00	3	0
Red 0	2	1
Red 1	0	1
Red 2	2	4
Red 3	0	1
Sock	**Display**	**Stock**
Black 000	3	0
Black 00	2	0
Black 0	4	1
Black 1	1	0
Black 2	3	4
Black 3	5	2
Sock	**Display**	**Stock**
Blue 000	5	0
Blue 00	1	3
Blue 0	2	3
Blue 1	4	1
Blue 2	3	5
Blue 3	1	2

Sample answers

1. Are any of the materials being given to a candidate user-friendly? **Yes, they are clearly written.**
2. Do the materials include any explicit information about how to deal with communication skills issues? **Yes. The assessment methods section of the standards give suggestions about how to assess the candidate.**
3. Could the assessment materials be easily modified to suit candidates with a range of communication skills difficulties? **Yes. Assessors could select the most appropriate tasks from the list or they are given the choice to develop their own assessment activity.**
4. Do the assessment materials require language, literacy and/or numeracy skills over and above the level in the standard/s they are designed to assess? **This depends on the requirements of the workplace. The standards do not specify a particular level although computational accuracy is obviously an issue.**
5. Are the materials written in plain English? **Yes.**
6. Do the materials include pictures and graphics to supplement text? **Yes. You would expect many of the workplace documents, order forms and invoices to be in this format.**

7. Do the materials have any particular cultural bias? **Not particularly, however they do presuppose an understanding of retail culture and consumer rights.**

8. Do the materials themselves require assessors to have particular communication skills? **Numeracy skills at least at the level of the assessment tasks.**

Sample Assessment Task 2

Hydrocarbon, chemical and oil industry Training Package	
Unit: Communication 100	
Element	**Performance Criteria**
1. Receive and Relay Oral and Written Messages	• Accurately record the message
Condition	
The resources required for this activity are: • Telephone or two way radio • Incoming message • Learning Resource Manual (Communication 100)	
Assessment Guide	
The assessee, under the supervision of the assessor, must visit the control room to accurately record a message where the assessee will: Answer oral questions pertaining to the practical activity to prove that the assessee can perform the activity without damage to equipment, environment and persons. Note: The assessor will ask questions that reflect the specific equipment or procedures at the worksite. Execute the following task(s) if the assessor is satisfied that the activity can be carried out safely.	

Practical Activity Task

- Accurately record in writing all the main points in the message
- Ask questions to ensure you fully understand the message
- Document an incoming message
- Simplify the message if possible, without losing the meaning
- Read back verbal messages to ensure the contents of the messages are accurately recorded

Sample Assessment Task 3

Administration Training Package
Unit TEC401 Produce complex documents
Element 1
There are four elements or parts to this unit of competency: • Establish document design and structure • Develop template or macros for document design • Produce documents • Save file and exit system
TEC401 covers the production of complex documents using advanced functions of a software package and integrating two or more software packages. The unit also develops competency in establishing the design and layout of documents to meet enterprise requirements. The information, learning activities and assessment task in this resource are designed to reflect the standard of performance needed to demonstrate competency in this unit.
Assessment
Portfolio of complex documents
There is one assessment task for TEC401. You are required to produce a range of complex documents, to be presented as a portfolio. Listed below are the range of documents to be completed, and the features/functions to be incorporated within the document. A minimum of two examples of each document is required. Tick the check boxes as you complete your documents, incorporating the features and functions identified. Label or attach a summary page to each document to list the features and functions used.

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List of documents:	Layout features:
• Flow chart • Organisational chart • Letterhead • Newsletter • Brochure • 1-2page A4 form • 3-4page formal report	• Columns • Reverse text • Drop caps • Pull quotes • Rules • Appropriate use of white space • Graphics • Colour • Header and footer with facing pages • Title page
Draw features:	**Advanced functions:**
• Examples of software to demonstrate competency may include MS Draw, MS WordArt, CorelDRAW, Adobe Illustrator • Text and graphic boxes • In-line graphics • Manipulation of graphics • Special effects (artistic text)	• Styles • Macros • Templates • Automatically generated table of contents • Footnotes/endnotes • Integrating • Linking and updating documents • Automatic level numbers

Sample Assessment Task 4

Tourism Training Package
Unit: Co-ordinate the production of brochures and marketing materials THTSMA01A
This unit applies to all sectors of both the tourism and hospitality industries.
To demonstrate competence in this unit, the trainee would be required to: 1. Plan the production of brochures and marketing materials 2. Produce information for inclusion 3. Obtain quotations for artwork and printing as appropriate 4. Develop final copy for brochures and marketing materials 5. Co-ordinate the production of brochures and marketing materials.
Assessment Item
Design a creative promotional strategy for one segment of the Japanese tourism market and co-ordinate production activities.
Your assessment task
This task requires you to prepare a creative promotional strategy to attract one segment of the Japanese tourism market to your business. Your strategy must be in print form and may be a brochure, poster or article for a tourist agency or an 'In Flight' magazine. The content should be in a mock-up format to present to a design studio or printer and include body text and layout specifications. Ask your assessor to set a time frame in which to complete the work. Co-ordinate all the associated activities leading up to the final production stage. The three major segments in this market in terms of demographics are: **1. Office Ladies** Unmarried, high disposable income, high propensity to travel. Interested in water sports, gourmet dining, shopping for fashion and exploring old towns and buildings. **2. Honeymooners** Three quarters of a million couples are married each year in Japan. They account for more than 50% of the high quality wholesale tours which come from Japan. These people are interested in seeing as much of Australia as can be packed into eight days. Ayers Rock, Surfers Paradise, and the Great Barrier Reef are high on their list. **3. The silver market** People aged over 50 years make up about 25% of the total population, or about 44 million people. They demand high quality productions and service. They are mostly interested in sightseeing and have considerable sums of money to spend. A Japanese speaking guide is often required, as many tourists in this segment do not have a good command of English.

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Note to trainers/supervisors

It is recommended that the information provided in this assessment item be adapted to suit the context, and therefore the markets, served by the trainee's own workplace, or alternatively an enterprise where the trainee aspires to work at some time in the future.

Use the information as a pattern to follow in making the task as relevant as possible to individual trainees.

Sample Assessment Task 5

Information Technology Training Package
Certificate II Client Support
Communicating in the workplace
The overall task for the assessee is to demonstrate the knowledge and skills to promote professional client support through verbal and non-verbal communication. • This assessment items covers all elements of • Communication in the workplace: ICAITTW002A • Establish contact with clients • Process information.
Task description
The assessee must show they can receive and respond to client requests in the professional manner. The assessee may demonstrate the knowledge and skills of this unit directly through practical demonstrations, or indirectly through collecting, presenting and discussing a portfolio of workplace or training evidence. It may be useful to have a combination of indirect and direct assessment methods.
Evidence the assessee might collect:
• file notes or records of telephone conversations including client requests • record of client visits to the organisation • report from supervisor, peer or client outlining that assessee has used effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies • report from supervisor, peer or client that assessee has demonstrated active listening and questioning skills to determine a client's support needs • record of messages taken, memorandums and e-mail, for example a log book, print out of e-mails • file notes, record or telephone conversations on progress of action on a client's request • file notes, records of follow-up action that may be required for client request.

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Methods the assessor can use to collect/verify the evidence

Observation of the assessee:

- receiving and responding to client requests in a polite and courteous manner
- using effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies
- using questioning and active listening skills to identify a client's support needs
- maintaining client service standards and organisational code of conduct
- recording messages or information and promptly passing them on.

Examination of the portfolio evidence provided by the assessee

Questioning of the assessee to verify portfolio evidence and/or to indicate knowledge of promoting client support in the workplace. The following questions may be useful.

- What strategies did you use to communicate politely and courteously to your clients?
- How did you handle requests and inquiries from clients of different culture, varying age and with a disability?
- What were some of the questions you asked to determine your client's needs?
- How did you determine who to refer requests to?
- Did you keep your client assured of the progress on their inquiry or problem? How and when was this assurance given?

Additional notes

- Assessee should demonstrate effective communication strategies with a range of internal and external clients including team members, supervisors and management.
- Processing information relates to clarifying and recording information and does not involve technical problem solving.
- Client requests from internal staff may be received through memos, electronic mail and bulletin boards.
- Competency may be demonstrated in a workplace or simulated workplace environment. In a workplace environment, assessees would need to simulate dealing with a variety of client requests.
- Evidence should be collected over a period of one month to achieve consistency of performance.
- Work is to be carried out under direct supervision and workplace tasks are routine with clear direction.

9. References

Contacts and Advice

The government training authority in your State or Territory will be able to provide you with a list of Registered Training Organisations.

Workplace Training short courses are offered by TAFE colleges and private providers Australia-wide. Contact a provider directly or look for advertisements in your major daily newspapers.

Additional help and advice about workplace communication and training may be obtained from:

Language Australia
GPO Box 372F
Melbourne Vic 3001
Tel: 1800 247 352

The Reading and Writing Hotline
(referral service covering most providers in the States and Territories)
Tel: 1300 655 506

ANTA National Training Information Service
http://www.anta.gov.au/ntis

References

NB Many of the references below are from draft Training Packages. To obtain the final published versions, contact the relevant Industry Training Advisory Board or Australian Training Products Ltd, or consult the ANTA National Training Information Service website listed above.

Admin Training Company 1998, *Level 4 Business Admin Kit*, Admin Training Company, Melbourne.

Fitzpatrick, L. & Roberts A. 1997, *Workplace Communication in National Training Packages: a practical guide*, Language Australia, Melbourne.

Forest & Forest Products Employment Skills Company 1998, *Draft National Industry Competency Standards for Forest Growing and Management*, FAFPESC, Nunawading, Victoria.

CIT 1998, *Draft Certificate II in Information Technology*, Australian Training Products, Melbourne.

Manufacturing Learning Australia 1998, *Draft Chemicals and Oils Industry Training Package, Assessment Guidelines*, Australian Training Products, Melbourne.

CIT Solutions Pty Ltd/Faculty of Tourism, Retail and Hospitality, Canberra Institute of Technology 1998, *Tourism Training Package, Draft Assessment Material*, Australian Training Products, Melbourne.

Manufacturing, Engineering & Related Services Industry Training Advisory Body 1998, *(Draft) Addressing Language Literacy and Numeracy Issues in Workplace Assessment*, MERS Sydney.

National WRAPS 1998, *National Retail Training Package Competency Standards*, Australian Training Products, Melbourne.

National WRAPS 1998, *Certificate II in Retail Operations, Communicate in the Retail Workplace, Workplace Coach Guide*, Australian Training Products, Melbourne.

Transport & Distribution Training Australia 1998, *Assessment Guidelines Transport & Distribution Training Package*, Australian Training Products, Melbourne.

Transport & Distribution Training Australia 1997, *Draft Warehousing Competency Standards and Qualifications*, Australian Training Products, Melbourne.

Community Services and Health Training Australia Ltd 1998, *Draft Unit of Competency, Community Services Training Package*, Community Services and Health Training Australia Ltd, Qld.

Resources about workplace language, literacy and numeracy

The Language Australia National Resource Centre (LANRC) is on-line at http://langoz.anu.edu.au

You can access publications from the Commonwealth funded Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program and the workplace literacy, language and numeracy resources from the Adult Education Resource and Information Service (ARIS) collection.

Types of materials

Materials and resources include:

- curriculum and assessment resources
- professional development materials
- policy documents

- research reports and papers
- training materials
- bibliographies
- project reports.

Search on-line

You can search the LANRC databases on-line or, for more information, contact the Victorian office of Language Australia on free call 1800 247 352.

Useful resources

Australian National Training Authority 1997, *A directory of professional development programs and resources for vocational teachers, workplace trainers and curriculum writers*, ANTA, Melbourne.

Australian National Training Authority 1997, *Better Training: Addressing English language, literacy and numeracy in vocational education and training*, ANTA, Melbourne.

Courtenay, Marianne and Mawer, Giselle 1995, *Integrating English language, literacy and numeracy into vocational education and training: a framework*, NSW Technical and Further Education Commission, Foundation Studies Training Division, Blacktown, NSW.

Edwards, Robyn with Morrelle, Kaymolly (eds) 1997, *Workplace leadership: a resource package for training team leaders of non-English speaking backgrounds: trainee's workbook*, Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES), Workplace Communication Services, Melbourne.

Goddard, Ruth and Re[illegible], Margaret 1995, *The value of time: numeracy for workers in manufacturing*, Council [illegible] Adult Education (CAE), Melbourne.

Health Services Union of Australia (HSUA) Vic. No.1 Branch, 1996, *The health care and hospital environment: a resource for training in the health industry*, Health Services Union of Australia (HSUA), Vic. No.1 Branch, Melbourne.

Health Services Union of Australia (HSUA) Vic. No.1 Branch, 1996, *Workplace communication: a resource for training in the health industry*, Health Services Union of Australia (HSUA), Vic. No.1 Branch, Melbourne.

Kindler J, 1994, *Working words: a user's guide to written communication at work*, Victorian Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Melbourne.

Linda Wyse & Associates 1997, *Speak up write now: communication skills development for health care sector*, Linda Wyse & Associates, Hawthorn, Victoria.

McKenna, R 1998, *Ten Fold Returns – Human Resource Manager Information Kit*, ANTA, Melbourne.

Marr, Beth; Anderson, Chris and Tout, Dave 1994, *Numeracy on the line: language based activities for adults*, National Automotive Industry Training Board (NAITB), Doncaster, Victoria.

Purcell, R. and Cielens, M. 1998 *Workplace Language and Literacy in Action*, Language, Literacy and Numeracy Skills Development, Training Packages and Workplace Training, DETAFE, South Australia.

Tout, Dave; Renshaw, Melva and Kindler Jan 1996, *An annotated bibliography of workplace basic education resources and readings: 1996 update*, Victorian Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ASFE), Melbourne.

Wignall, L 1998, *Built in-not bolted on – Language, Literacy and Numeracy Professional Development Kit*, ANTA, Melbourne.

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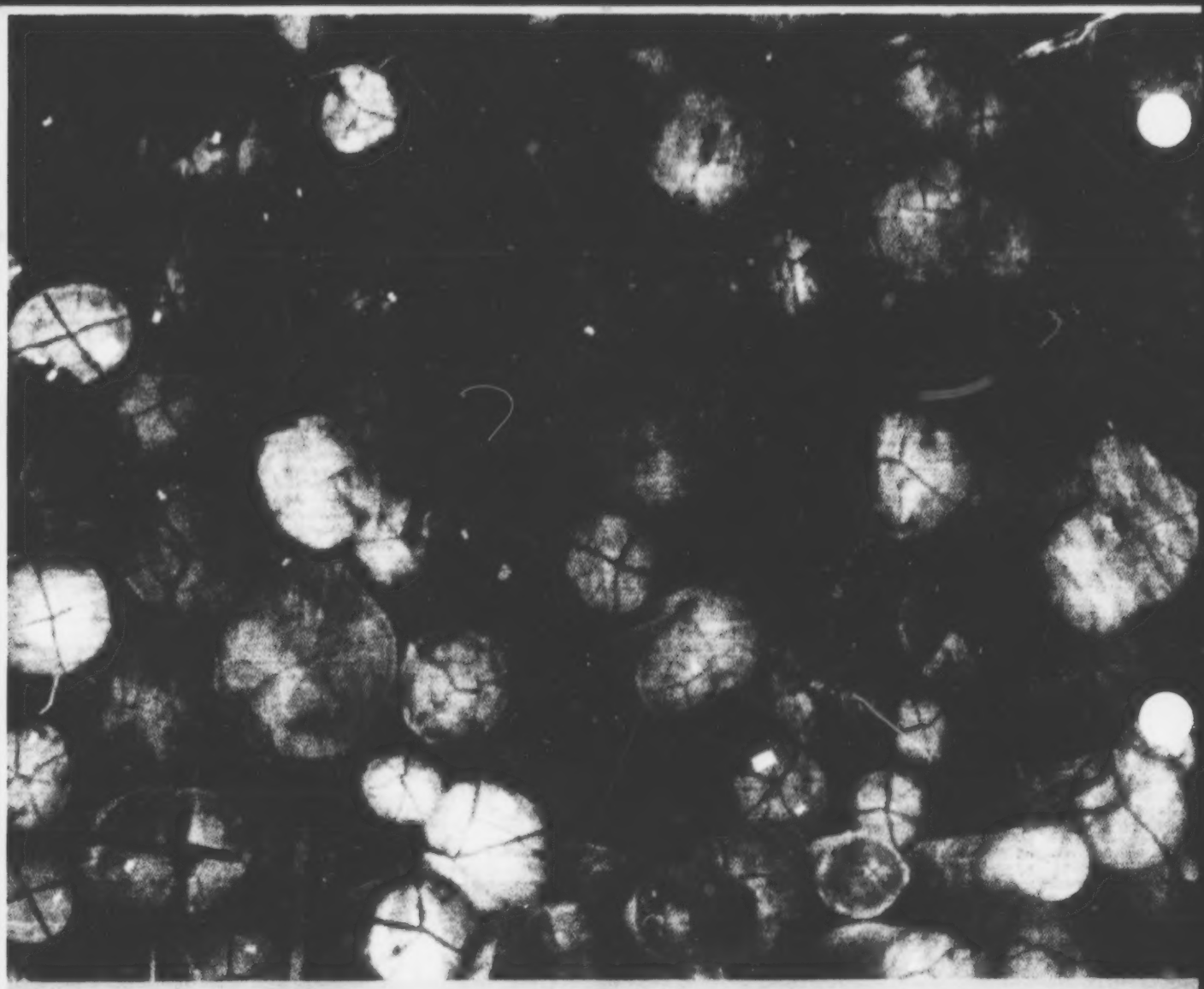

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